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Give first to your own faithful toilers  
 The freedom our birthright should claim,  
 And take from these ruthless despoilers  
 The power which they use to our shame.  
 Columbia, too long you have dallied  
 With foes whom you feed from your store;  
 It is time that your wardens were rallied  
 And stationed outside the locked door.

ELLA WHEELER WILCOX.

#### IV.

##### REMARKS ON BALLOTING AND COPYRIGHT.

ALL people interested in purifying our politics must realize that one of the questions that demand immediate attention is the substitution of some system akin to that obtaining in Australia for our present methods of printing and distributing ballots at the expense, and by the agents, of the various candidates and political organizations. The ballots should be printed by the State, a sufficient guarantee being required of those who ask that a given set be printed, so as to prevent a needless multiplication of candidates with little or no support; and they should be distributed without the intervention of ticket peddlers and the like. Each voter should have the various sets of ballots put into his hand, and then should be obliged to rely on his own knowledge in choosing out the individuals for whom he wishes to vote. This, by the way, would provide a very practical "educational test," not only for the illiterate, but also for very many of those who pride themselves upon being "intelligent voters," and who are, nevertheless, afflicted with a singularly dense and profound ignorance of all that goes on in their own districts.

Anent another subject, permit me to record my regret that when we seemed on the eve of at last winning a victory for honest copyright, Mr. Pearsall Smith should have started in to make what I trust will prove to be an ineffectual diversion in favor of the enemy.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

#### V.

##### GENIUS AND IDIOCY.

NEARLY every lover of music who can command the requisite entrance fee has within the past few months listened to the performance of a lad not yet in his teens upon the most elaborate of modern musical instruments. Without comprehending the rules of composition, he composes correctly, he improvises, he interprets, and, in short, does an amazing number of things difficult for any one, and which he has no business to do according to any established precedent. It is no wonder that every one with music in his, and especially in her soul, should be enchanted by his unaffected ways, childlike simplicity, and wonderful natural endowments.

Contemporary with this boy, though his senior by many years, is another musical genius. He played the piano by instinct at as early an age as did young Hofmann. With infinitely fewer advantages he developed a facility quite as wonderful in its way. Blind he is too, and born a slave with a black skin. It is not our purpose to compare Blind Tom with the gifted young Pole, but the two afford such a parallel of oppositions that the contrast and the likeness provoke reflection.

Here are two human brains, both endowed with what we call genius. In one case it was developed amid the congenial surroundings of an ancient European city—a musical centre of some repute. In the other case it simply “grewed,” like Topsy. The two infantile brains are so nearly alike that no one can say which of them is, or was, originally superior to the other. But the white boy possesses what we call reason, while the black boy is practically an idiot. How narrow is the margin that differentiates the two intelligences. A trifling protuberance on the inside of the negro’s skull may make all the difference between them. In his uncared for babyhood he may have fallen down the kitchen stairs and bumped that extraordinary head of his just hard enough to knock the sense out and leave the music in. A like accident might have wrought a like change in the case of young Hofmann, or, indeed, might have had a reverse effect, eliminating the music and leaving only the common sense. The child of European culture would then never have been heard of, and the half-witted negro, slave-born, only two or three removes from an African kraal, would have remained almost, if not quite, the most remarkable instance of unadulterated, uninstructed, musical genius that the world can show.

ADRIAN REXFORD.

## VI.

### MOHAMMEDANISM IN AFRICA.

No little excitement has made itself felt among a small circle of religious writers and their readers in the English periodical press lately concerning the respective usefulness of Mohammedanism and Christianity in civilizing the African heathen. The ball of controversy was set in motion by Canon Taylor, of York Cathedral, who produced a paper going to show that not only were Mohammedan missionaries more alert and successful in Africa,—successful in making converts,—but their converts, when made, were decidedly better, even mentally and morally, than the Christian converts are. So marked was the contrast drawn that it amounted to saying that Mohammedanism in Africa is an almost unmingled and beneficial success, while Christianity there is an undoubted failure.

Of course so startling a statement from a Christian minister of high rank, who must ardently wish that what he utters on the subject should have proved otherwise, could not be otherwise than exciting. Probably his going out of the way, too, to deliver a certain amount of *obiter dicta* in direct and voluntary eulogy of the morality of Mohammedanism was not calculated to make his general utterance particularly palatable. Canon MacColl, therefore, as well as others, have set up replies to this view of religious and moral evangelizing in Africa, and what is curious about them is that, mingled with much asperity of statement, they partly admit what Canon Taylor was frank enough to say.

Mr. Bosworth Smith, for instance, who is supposed to be an expert (if that word is allowable here) on the qualities and tendencies of Mohammedanism, says, in his *Nineteenth Century* paper, that Canon Taylor has “rushed with headlong heedlessness” upon dangerous statements. But then he adds—and this is the curious part of his position—that “the views which he thrust upon a sensitive and excited audience were, as nearly as possible, identical with those which, thirteen years ago, I had promulgated in my book, ‘Mohammed and Mohammedanism.’” His chief objection to them seems to be that they were slightly exaggerated by Canon Taylor, and were offered to a “sensitive and excited audience.”

In one respect, no doubt, as the controversy shows, Mohammedanism is valuable to the African heathen. It carries with it a Koran Temperance Society, while the commercial Christians—the traders—flood the dark continent with the